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SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA POLITICAL ROUND-UP OCTOBER 23, 2006

REF: A. BRATISLAVA 830

[B](#). BRATISLAVA 838

[C](#). BRATISLAVA 666

[D](#). BRATISLAVA 786

[E](#). BRATISLAVA 817

JUSTICE MINISTER MOVES CLOSER TO CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

[1](#). (U) Vladimir Meciar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) won agreement for their nomination of current Justice Minister Stefan Harabin to a seat on the Constitutional Court (ref A), only after two rounds of parliamentary voting on October 19. Any cracks in the coalition were patched up when Harabin received 82 votes during the second secret ballot. Including Harabin, three of the 13 nominees approved by parliament so far were nominated by Meciar. A judges' association closely affiliated with Harabin nominated another candidate on the approved list. Only one of the 13 candidates was nominated by the opposition. Parliament should eventually approve 18 names to submit to President Ivan Gasparovic, who will choose nine of them to fill vacancies on the bench.

[2](#). (U) When and if Harabin moves to the Constitutional Court, HZDS will have the right to nominate the next Justice Minister, according to the power-sharing agreement among the Smer-led governing coalition. Meciar announced on October 22 that four names are on the shortlist and that HZDS intends to nominate a woman for the job. One of the rumoured names is Meciar sycophant and former Interior Minister Katherina Tothova.

RENEWED SLOVAK-RUSSIAN FRIENDSHIP?

[3](#). (U) According to media reports, a proposal to register a "Slovak-Russian Association" was signed by former dissidents, communists, businessmen, and nationalists, including the Deputy Chairperson for the Slovak National Party (SNS), Anna Belousova; former President of Slovakia, Rudolf Schuster; former dissident and member of the Presidium of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), Jan Carnogursky; former Economy Minister Ludovit Cernak; socialist playwright Osvald Zahradnik; businessman with Russian heritage and Smer financial backer Alexander Rozin; and opera singer Gorgen Ovsepiian.

[4](#). (SBU) At the first meeting, the group chose Carnogursky as its head with Belousova as the deputy, despite the fact that the two hold leadership positions in rival political parties. The stated purpose of the association is to explore cultural and economic relations among the two countries. Business will likely be the primary focus. The group may also debate political aspects of the Slovak-Russian relationship. However, its bylaws forbid comments on the internal and foreign policy of the Russian Federation.

SNS NOMINEE DOES NOT GET NOD TO HEAD NATIONAL MEMORY INST.

¶5. (SBU) On October 23, parliament again failed to agree on a candidate to head the Institute of the Memory of the Nation, a body which is mandated to publish previously-classified files from the totalitarian and communist regimes in Slovakia from 1938-1989. The SNS-nominated candidate, 28-year old lawyer Adrian Kucek, is the only candidate from the governing coalition. However, he failed in several attempts to get enough votes. (COMMENT. One published commentary claimed that Smer Deputy Prime Minister Dusan Caplovic was actively campaigning against Kucek because he is not an historian. This, along with the multiple votes needed to nominate Justice Minister Harabin to the Constitutional Court, demonstrates the tensions that exist within the coalition. END COMMENT.) Parliament will vote again and Kucek will again be the coalition's nominee. Some observers fear that an SNS nominee will be reluctant to release files showing the World War II Slovak State in a negative light, as many within the party regard the 1939-1945 regime of Jozef Tiso as an important precedent for an independent Slovakia.

SNS PARTY RE-ELECTS SLOTA AS CHAIRMAN

¶6. (U) The Slovak National Party (SNS) re-elected Jan Slota as its Chairman on October 21. Slota called for all Slovak political parties to distance themselves from the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK), which he labelled "extremist", a retort to those who describe SNS as extremist.

IMPORTING GENDER EQUALITY

¶7. (U) Following-up on its stated commitment in the government program plan (ref C), the GOS lobbying for Slovakia to become the home of the European Institute for Gender Equality, an independent EU entity. Slovakia believes

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it has a strong chance to host the institute if the Deputy Prime Minister's office is successful in identifying a suitable building by early November.

MORMONS ARE OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED BY GOS

¶8. (SBU) On October 18, the Ministry of Culture officially registered the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a religion in Slovakia. The ceremony was attended by one of the Mormon's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, David Bednar. Mormon representatives said they faced no governmental obstacles or delays to the registration once they provided the necessary 20,000 signatures on a petition to support the Church's registration (ref D).

SILVERMAN